



**Operation Desert Home**  
**Southern Arizona Chapter American Red Cross**  
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## Operation Desert Home

2013-2014

**Tucson, Arizona**

**Federal Legislative District(s): 1,2,3**

### **PROGRAM FAST FACTS**

**Congressional District(s): 1, 2, 3**

**State Legislative District(s): 2, 3, 4, 7, 9, 10, 11, 14**

**Service Area by County: Pima, Graham, Greenlee, Cochise, and Santa Cruz**

**Project Federal Share: \$292,600**

**Project Local Match: \$124,154**

**Community Volunteers Recruited: 21**

**Volunteer Hours Served: 8,867**

**Value of Volunteer Hours: \$178,049**

\*2011 Independent Sector Rate for the Value of a Volunteer Hour in Arizona is \$20.08

### **Community Need**

Arizona is home to more than 600,000 service members and veterans. A gap exists in delivery of critical social services to military, veterans and their families because of economic downturn, budget reductions in Department of Defense and Veteran Affairs social support services, overburdened support systems, as well as limited service agencies in communities. Operation Desert Home bridges that gap with support and services through our American Red Cross Service to the Armed Forces and Veterans department.



### **National Priority Area - Veterans and Military Families:**

Operation Desert Home focuses all performance measures on the National Priority Area of Veterans and Military Families. The program recruits members who are Veterans or family members, and then serves Active Duty, Guard, Reserve, Veterans, and their family members, vital need in our region.

### **Program Activities**

Our AmeriCorps members actively engage with military bases, institutions of higher education, Veteran medical facilities, Veteran service organizations and community partners to increase Red Cross outreach to service members, veterans, and their families. The members at Davis Monthan AFB and the 162<sup>nd</sup> ANG are trained Veterans Service and Benefits Officers who work with the Airmen and Family Readiness Center and base leadership to assist active duty airmen, Veterans and family with service related benefits for disability, medical and educational support, information and referral, outreach and recruitment of volunteers. AmeriCorps members at the Vet Center in the University of Arizona serve as peer mentors providing tutoring and academic support to their fellow veteran students. Placement in the Vet Center is a vital link to reaching the younger generation of veterans who do not participate in traditional Veterans' service organizations in the community. The American Red Cross Grand Canyon Chapter SAF, Fort Huachuca and 162<sup>nd</sup> Air National Guard members support events, give briefings, and provide client support as needed to military and families. Operation Desert Home team is successfully making a difference in the community. AmeriCorps members' commitment to serve has greatly increased the capacity of American Red Cross Service to the Armed Forces core services in the region.

### **Program Impact**

Operation Desert Home AmeriCorps members, many of whom are veterans or family members themselves, bring passion and drive for continued service to the military, veterans and families in the American Red Cross Service to the Armed Forces region. Reductions in budgets have affected the military units in our region as programs and positions have been eliminated. Our AmeriCorps members have been able to stand in that gap created by a shrinking military staff and budget. During the 2012-2013 program year, the Operation Desert Home AmeriCorps members provided support services to 10,906 active duty military members and 3,920 veterans family members received the same support services. One specific example is the Family Readiness unit at the 162<sup>nd</sup> Air National Guard. Our member, Rose Mardula, assists families and Airmen daily alongside the staff member of the unit. She was commended for her efforts during a formal inspection of the unit for being a "force multiplier" in a period of stress for the military staff and budget. Another example occurred when the Davis-Monthan AFB Airmen and Family Readiness Unit were required to furlough civilian staff on Fridays. Our AmeriCorps team at DMAFB stepped up to help cover those days by assisting Airmen and their families with urgent needs. This partnership has become a trusted working relationship between the military bases and the Red Cross AmeriCorps team because the members exhibit strong work ethic, an understanding of military culture, and the ability to assist clients in times of need.



# Operation Desert Home

Federal Legislative District(s): 1,2,3

## Mission

The American Red Cross prevents and alleviates human suffering in the face of emergencies by mobilizing the power of volunteers and the generosity of donors. Service to the Armed Forces (SAF), a key function of the American Red Cross, will provide humanitarian support to service members, veterans, and their families around the clock, around the globe, under a trusted symbol. The SAF program, Operation Desert Home, will deliver needed social services, including case management, benefits advocacy, information and referrals, outreach and education to Active Duty, Guard, Reserve, Veterans and their family members throughout Arizona.

## Vision

The American Red Cross, through its strong network of volunteers, donors and partners, is always there in times of need. We aspire to turn compassion into action so that all members of our armed services, veterans and their families find support and comfort whenever needed.

## History

The American Red Cross has provided support to members of the U.S. Armed Forces and their family members for more than 125 years. The Southern Arizona Chapter of the American Red Cross activated Operation Desert Home with nine members in 2010 to meet the growing needs of the large military and veteran population in the region. Building community partnerships and relationships with military leadership, the program has grown to twenty-two members located across the state. The partnerships established by this program have increased the American Red Cross capacity to assist our heroes' pre and post defending our country. Over 10,000 have been reached to date.

## Partnerships

Davis Monthan Air Force Base  
162<sup>nd</sup> Air National Guard  
Army National Guard  
Fort Huachuca  
Luke Air Force Base  
Southern Arizona VA Health Care System  
Phoenix VA Health Care System  
Northern Arizona VA Health Care System  
University of Arizona Vet Center  
Pima Community College Vet Center  
Tohono O'odham Nation Veterans  
National Guard Phoenix  
Grand Canyon Chapter American Red Cross  
AZDVS – Veterans Benefits

## OTHER

The Operation Desert Home program has been instrumental in establishing a connection with the American Red Cross and our service members, Veterans and their families. This connection has provided much needed financial, education, benefits assistance, information, and referrals. In addition to the necessities we have also had the great honor to bring positive morale to the service members, Veterans and their families through events. Our members have participated in the Operation Open House holiday gift giveaways, created holiday cards to send to our warriors, assisted homeless Veterans, and witnessed the elementary age children honor our Veterans with a Flag Ceremony. These events have brought tears to a few, relief to some and joy to many.

